

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

Testimony

Senate Bill No. 299 and House Bill Nos. 5339 and 5340

Environment Committee

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Connecticut Land Conservation Council

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Co-Chairs Cohen and Demicco, Vice-Chairs Gresko and Kushner, Ranking Members Harding and Miner, and members of the Environment Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to present testimony on behalf of CLCC in support of the following bills:

SB 299 An Act Concerning The Distribution Of Single-Use Plastic Straws

HB 5339 An Act Prohibiting The Release Of Helium Balloons Into The Atmosphere

HB 5340 An Act Concerning The Modernization Of The Connecticut Bottle Redemption Program

As the state's umbrella organization for the land conservation community, including its 137+/- land trusts, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) advocates for land conservation, stewardship and funding, and works to ensure the long-term strength and viability of the land conservation community in Connecticut.

At first glance, it would appear that commenting on bills concerning plastic, balloons, and bottle redemption is a bit outside the scope of CLCC's land conservation mission. However, successful land conservation is as much about the perpetual care of the habitats and other conservation values of the land as it is about securing the legal protection of the land to begin with. At every level, both public and private, we need to continue to do whatever we can to ensure continued quality and active stewardship and management of conservation lands throughout the state. With the majority of Connecticut's land trusts operating on the backs of volunteers -- and municipalities hampered by budgetary constraints -- this is no easy task.

Land management and stewardship is a huge responsibility of land trust and community park and open space volunteers and staff; their daily work includes everything from implementing management plans, building and maintaining trails, battling invasives, monitoring for violations of the easements, encroachments and other illegal activity, to picking up trash.

Enacting SB 299, HB 5339 and HB 5340 into law will help in the constant battle to keep our preserves, parks, and other open spaces free of debris that are unsightly, harmful to the quality of our land and water, and hazardous to birds and other wildlife.

With respect to HB 5340, CLCC concurs with the recommendation to expand the bill to include more types of beverage containers, including wine and liquor bottles.

On behalf of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, I thank you for your leadership in raising these important bills and for this opportunity to provide our comments. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

